



# National Weather Service Student Opportunities

NWS Quad Cities, IA/IL November 2023

National Weather Service offices regularly provide opportunities for college students to gain valuable work experience, both as paid employees and as unpaid volunteers. Many NWS employees participated in such programs themselves when they were students, and remain grateful for the experience. For this reason they understand how beneficial such programs can be and are eager to return the favor. This is true even if a student ends up not working for the NWS.

Of course, the NWS benefits from these programs as well. We gain extra help for a few months and give potential future employees a running start toward a successful NWS career. When deciding which recent graduate to hire, an NWS manager may wish to select someone who has actual NWS experience -- and the positive recommendations to go with it! So the opportunity may lead to a career!

## *Important Overarching Student Program Links:*

**NOAA & NWS Student Opportunities:** [noaa.gov/national-weather-service/student-opportunities](https://noaa.gov/national-weather-service/student-opportunities)

**NWS Student Employment:** [weather.gov/eo-diversity/eo\\_student\\_research\\_opportunities](https://weather.gov/eo-diversity/eo_student_research_opportunities)

**NWS Careers:** [weather.gov/careers](https://weather.gov/careers)

**USAJobs (Pathways and Entry Level Positions After Graduation):** [www.usajobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov)

**NWS Story Map for Students:** [weather.gov/students](https://weather.gov/students)

## **Paid vs. Unpaid**

Students may work either in a paid or unpaid capacity. The process of gaining a paid position is more formal and more competitive, and typically requires a greater commitment from the student. Two opportunities for paid employment include the Pathways program and the NOAA Hollings Scholarship

## **Pathways Program**

The Pathways Program provides paid employment for students from undergraduate through post-graduate school. Selections are made by local forecast offices, but not every local forecast office will have a Pathways student, as it varies from year-to-year. To browse existing opportunities, to set up an account to be notified of future opportunities, and for more visit USAJOBS at [www.usajobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov).

## **The NOAA Ernest F. Hollings Scholarship Program**

Another form of paid employment (and scholarship money!) is offered through the NOAA Hollings Scholarship. Once a year, NOAA solicits applications for a scholarship program in honor of retired South Carolina Senator Ernest F. Hollings, who promoted oceanic and atmospheric research throughout his career. Scholarship students are eligible for academic assistance during their junior and senior years; a paid 10-week, full-time internship position during the summer at a NOAA facility; a housing subsidy for scholars who do not reside at home during the summer internship; and travel expenses to attend and participate in a mandatory orientation and conference. For more, see: [www.noaa.gov/office-education/hollings-scholarship](https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/hollings-scholarship)



# National Weather Service Student Opportunities

NWS Quad Cities, IA/IL November 2023

## Student Volunteer Service

NWS Quad Cities also offers unpaid work experience for college students. Students will have an opportunity to explore their career options and to develop both professional and personal skills. Selections are made locally at NWS Quad Cities, and while the process is less formal than for a paid position, the competition can be just as tough. In a typical summer we may have one to three positions to offer. We occasionally may have a volunteer or two opportunity during the fall or spring semesters. Hybrid opportunities, that are a combination between virtual and in-office, may be possible as well.

Note that students don't have to be studying meteorology in order to be considered for a Volunteer position. We will consider hosting students with skills in Hydrology, Communications/Graphics Design, Information Technology, Geographic Information Systems, or other related fields. We would be especially eager to host students who have multiple of these skills!

### *Factors that will help your chances to be selected as a volunteer*

- United States citizenship (required)
- Currently at least a half-time student (required)
- Computer and programming skills (Python, GIS, data analysis, etc) -- encouraged

### *Additional factors*

- Year in school and amount of relevant coursework completed, Academic record
- Activities outside of class (other paid work experience, leadership positions in clubs, volunteer work, etc.)

**Resume Suggestions:** [weather.gov/media/dvn/Brochures/Students\\_Resume\\_Suggestions.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/dvn/Brochures/Students_Resume_Suggestions.pdf)

### *Work hours for student volunteers*

Understanding that student volunteers have other commitments, including academic work and perhaps paid employment, we are flexible about the hours that a student works as a volunteer. However, we ask that a student averages at least 8 hours per week over the course of a summer or semester. We ask students to work at least part of their time during normal business hours, Monday through Friday. Also, if the work can be split across two different days, students gain greater exposure to a wider variety of weather and interact with a larger number of different forecasters.

### *Earning college credit as a volunteer*

Students should check with their college about earning credit toward graduation for the time they spend volunteering. Specific policies vary by institution. For example, some schools may require the student to work more than 8 hours per week in order to earn credit. Otherwise, it does not matter to the NWS whether a student is volunteering for credit or not.



# National Weather Service Student Opportunities

NWS Quad Cities, IA/IL November 2023

## *Students will spend their time on a variety of activities*

- Shadowing forecasters and other staff members
- Assisting during active weather
- Taking weather observations
- Working on specific projects with a staff member
- Writing or editing content for the office webpage or social media outlets
- Possible on-site decision support with an NWS forecaster
- Participating on storm damage surveys

## *Rules and regulations for volunteers*

The National Weather Service, as an agency of the United States Department of Commerce (DOC), is bound by the laws, policies, guidelines, and procedures regarding voluntary and uncompensated services as summarized in [DOC Administrative Order 202-311](#). This is important information for potential volunteers. For example, Section 2.03.d in this document explains the citizenship requirements for volunteers: "If an agency may not hire citizens of a particular country, citizens of that country may not serve as student volunteers." Also note the Student Volunteer Agreement at the bottom of that document. The first point requires that: "The student is enrolled **at least half time** at an accredited school, is recommended by the school, and is acceptable to the agency."

## *Applying for a student volunteer position at NWS Quad Cities*

Contact [cr.dvnstudents@noaa.gov](mailto:cr.dvnstudents@noaa.gov) to apply. The best time to do this is early in the semester prior to the one in which you hope to volunteer. For summer volunteers, this would mean January through early March. Prepare to send a resume listing your previous work experience, your completed coursework, status as a U.S. citizen, and any other relevant information such as computer and programming skills, significant class projects, volunteer activities, research experience, participation in student clubs, etc. Competition can be tough, but we will contact you if we need more information or would like to conduct a short interview.

Please visit the NWS Story Map designed specifically for students at [weather.gov/students](https://weather.gov/students) for more!

